

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/PAB:PWLANDE/MW
APPROVED BY P - MR. HABIB
NEA - MR. DUBS

-----211731Z 124790 /50

O R 211649Z MAY 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY DACCA IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 117991

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BG, US, IN

SUBJECT: ADMIRAL KHAN'S MEETING WITH UNDER SECRETARY
HABIB: BANGLADESH'S RELATIONS WITH INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA

1. THIS MESSAGE COVERS THOSE ASPECTS OF ADMIRAL KHAN'S
DISCUSSION WITH UNDER SECRETARY HABIB DEALING WITH BANGLA-
DESH'S RELATIONS WITH INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA POLICY AS A
WHOLE.

2. IN RESPONSE TO HABIB'S QUESTION, KHAN STATED NEGOTIA-
TIONS WITH INDIA ON FARAKKA HAD BOGGED DOWN AGAIN. THERE
WAS AN UNDERSTANDING COVERING A LIMITED TIME AND QUANTITY
OF WATER. THE BDG NOW SOUGHT AN AGREEMENT TO COVER "THE
ENTIRE" PERIOD. INDIA, HOWEVER, PROPOSED TO SHARE THE
WATER ON AN ARBITRARY BASIS KEEPING CLOSE TO 40,000 CUSECS.
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THERE WAS ALSO DISAGREEMENT ON THE FUTURE SCOPE OF AGREE-
MENTS WITH THE INDIANS PREFERRING TO LEAVE THE MATTER VAGUE
WHILE THE BANGLADESHIS ARE SEEKING SPECIFIC LANGUAGE. THE
SUBJECT WOULD BE DISCUSSED AGAIN IN DACCA IN JUNE.

3. KHAN STATED THAT BORDER PROBLEMS HAD EASED AND SOME
CAMPS FOR MISCREANTS IN INDIA HAD BEEN CLOSED DOWN. HOWEVER,

INCIDENTS STILL DO OCCUR. KHAN STATED THAT INDIA WAS TAKING THE POSITION THAT IT WANTED A PACKAGE DEAL ON RELATIONS WITH BANGLADESH WITH IMPROVED BORDER CONDITIONS TO BE CONSIDERED AS PART OF INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION. THE BDG, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS TAKING THE POSITION THAT THERE WAS NO LINKAGE BETWEEN THE BORDER PROBLEMS AND ANYTHING ELSE IN BILATERAL RELATIONS AND THAT IT WAS UP TO INDIA TO END THIS PROBLEM. KHAN EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN WEST BENGAL. HE CLAIMED THAT THE BDG EXPECTED THAT THE CPM WOULD WIN THE NEXT ELECTION. OVERALL THE BDG'S POLICY TOWARD INDIA WAS DESCRIBED AS "WAIT AND SEE."

4. KHAN ASKED ABOUT THE USG'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE NEW INDIAN GOVERNMENT. HABIB REPLIED THAT WE HAD GREETED THE FACT THAT A DEMOCRATIC DECISION HAD TAKEN PLACE IN INDIA. WE WERE SENDING AMBASSADOR GOHEEN TO DELHI AND HIS FIRST TASK WOULD BE TO SEEK TO DETERMINE THE TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP WHICH THE GOI SEEKS WITH US.

5. KHAN ASKED IF WE SAW A CHANGE IN THE INDIAN-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF GROMYKO'S VISIT. HABIB REPLIED THAT HE ATTACHED NO PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO THIS VISIT WHICH CLEARLY WAS MOTIVATED BY RUSSIAN CONCERN ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP. THE INDIAN RESPONSE TO OUR INITIAL VERBAL OVERTURES HAD BEEN POSITIVE AND WE WOULD WAIT AND SEE HOW THE RELATIONSHIP WOULD DEVELOP. DUBS ADDED THAT ONE FACTOR IN OUR EVALUATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD BE HOW IT CONDUCTS RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. HABIB NOTED THAT THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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AN EXTREMELY RESTRAINED POLICY WITH RESPECT TO PAKISTAN. KHAN REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT INDIAN RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS WOULD DETERIORATE. AT THE SAME TIME HE EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT CONSISTED OF "EXTREME RIGHTISTS."

6. WITH RESPECT TO U.S. RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN, HABIB NOTED THAT THERE WAS NO BASIS WHATSOEVER FOR PAKISTAN CHARGES OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE PAKISTAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROCESS. WE HAD NO DESIRE TO INTERFERE IN THIS PROCESS. WE WOULD WAIT PATIENTLY AND HOPE THE LEVEL OF RHETORIC WOULD DECREASE.

7. IN RESPONSE TO KHAN'S QUESTION ABOUT U.S. POLICY TOWARDS DIEGO GARCIA, HABIB REPLIED THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO DISCUSS ARMS LIMITATIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WITH THE SOVIET UNION. THERE HAD BEEN DISCUSSION AND FURTHER TALKS WOULD COMMENCE JUNE 8. HE STRESSED THAT WE WERE DISCUSSING LIMITATIONS, NOT WITHDRAWAL. IN THE MEANTIME, WORK ON DIEGO GARCIA

WOULD CONTINUE. ASSUMING U.S. AND SOVIET UNION COULD REACH SOME AGREEMENT, AT SOME LATER STAGE WE WOULD NOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY OF INCLUDING LITTORAL STATES IN THESE DISCUSSIONS. HOWEVER, THE TALKS HAD NOT GONE THAT FAR. ADMIRAL KHAN EXPRESSED A CONCERN THAT A WITHDRAWAL OF THE U.S. NAVY FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN WOULD LEAVE INDIA AS THE PREDOMINANT POWER. HABIB REPLIED THAT HE NOTED THE BDG'S CONCERN.

CHRISTOPHER

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